

Chapter 3

SARAH BROWN

Supporting Intellectual Giftedness

SECOND GRADE

Clover Valley Elementary School

Sarah Elizabeth Brown is a 7-year-old European American girl who has lived in Midland since birth with her parents, both of whom work at the local box factory. Mr. Brown is the third-shift foreman, and Mrs. Brown works in the human resources office as an administrative assistant.

Sarah's sister, Bethany, who is 3 years older than she, has recently qualified for the district's **talented and gifted (TAG)** program by scoring above the 95th percentile on the reading portion of the state's achievement test. The girls are close friends, as well as sisters, and spend much of their free time together. They like to play make-believe and have elaborate scenarios in which they are pioneers on the frontier, missionaries in South America, or orphans who are surviving on their own. Both girls play soccer on the box factory's team at the local park. They love every kind of school trip, especially to the art museum and the science center in the large city about an hour from Midland.

Sarah was born full-term, after an easy pregnancy. She weighed 7 pounds 6 ounces and had an Apgar rating of 10. As a toddler, she was very active and slept little, giving up her nap at 10 months. She spoke early, and by 2 was making up rhymes in language games with her older sister. At 3 and 4, she entertained her family at the breakfast table with accounts of her vivid dreams.

She has some mild reactions to certain foods, including citrus and chocolate, and occasionally has severe bronchitis. Her mother considers her a "picky eater," and she is currently at the 50th percentile for height and 35th percentile for weight for her age.

Her mother reports that she got a library card when Bethany was born and read constantly to the children from the time they were born until they started reading for themselves. Both girls got their own library cards as soon as they could sign their names. All the family

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members have reading lights attached to their beds, and there are stacks of books on every available surface. By the age of 4, Sarah was reading much of the printed material around her—cereal boxes, menus, and store signs—although she was never taught to read. In kindergarten and first grade, she dutifully filled out scores of phonics worksheets; at home she read chapter books, including everything by E. B. White and Madeleine L'Engle. The head librarian at the local library waived the restrictions on the number of books that could be borrowed, and Sarah was limited only by the number of books she could carry. She often writes imaginative stories, which are almost always based on things she has read rather than on her own original ideas.

During first grade, Sarah was reprimanded several times for “reading ahead” in the basal reader and for rolling her eyes or prompting other students when their responses were delayed. Her written work was usually correct although often sloppy. She did not always follow directions and twice received a zero on a paper for marking something other than the correct response. When she was finished with her work, she was allowed to read or to help the other children.

Second grade has been pretty much the same as the previous 2 years. She is in the highest group in reading but finds it pretty boring. It is more fun to talk with Bethany about books than to answer the questions the teacher poses. In math, the class still begins with “math meeting,” and Sarah wonders how long it will take them to get to the 100th day of school—and the 100th popsicle stick in the cup. At home, she is decorating her room with three-dimensional geofoms she copied from a library book.

During recess, Sarah plays happily with Susan Mitchell, her best friend. They enjoy playing in a wooded section of the playground and often bring in leaves, sticks, and insects they have found. The girls have compiled scrapbooks of their nature collections, which they are willing to share with anyone who is interested. Sarah has other scrapbooks at home, filled with stamps, postcards, pictures of horses, and the science experiments she talks her mother into helping her with at home.

Sarah and Susan spend a lot of time at each other's homes, and often Sarah is invited to spend Friday night with the Mitchell family. Susan's parents are both doctors in Midland, and their home is full of artwork and books on science, arts, and history. After playing board games at Susan's, Sarah runs home to duplicate the games using cardboard and crayons so that she and Bethany can play the same games—with a few creative changes—at their own home.

In response to a commercial they saw on TV, Sarah, Susan, and Bethany decided to raise money to send to St. Jude's Hospital to help in pediatric cancer research. Last summer they held a carnival and raised \$43 by selling refreshments, providing entertainment, and organizing games. They are sure that their contribution made the sick children happy.

Sarah has an impressive repertoire of jokes that she dips into often—and not always appropriately. Several times at school and at church she has gotten into trouble for telling a joke or making a flippant comment that only she thinks is funny. At age 7, she has already developed a reputation for being something of a smart aleck.

Although Sarah has done well in school so far, she has not been challenged to do her best work. She has learned that it takes very little effort to get A's and impress her teachers. She feels confused sometimes by the reactions of adults and children to her comments, and she thinks sometimes that there must be something wrong with her.

EIGHTH GRADE

Midland Middle School

Sarah Brown, now 13, is in the eighth grade at Midland Middle School. Sarah's sister, Bethany, is a junior at Midland High School, a straight A student and soloist in the show choir. The girls have grown apart over the past couple of years as their interests have taken them in different directions. Bethany thinks her sister is a little weird and wonders why she hangs around with those nerdy friends of hers. Sarah was recently grounded for calling Bethany "narrow minded and shallow" once too often within their mother's earshot.

At the end of third grade, Sarah was identified as "superior cognitive" based on her **IQ** score on the **Woodcock-Johnson Test of Cognitive Ability**. In fourth through sixth grades, she attended a "**pull-out**" program for gifted children one day a week at the middle school. Her teacher, Mr. Haines, provided the students with a wide array of activities, including creative writing, problem solving, and critical thinking. Most important, as Sarah told her mother, Mr. Haines's room was a "safe place to be smart." She made friends with several of the students in her gifted class and sought out their company after school. These classmates have continued to be her closest friends.

In Mr. Haines's class, Sarah began to write stories that were based on her own ideas rather than on those of the books she read. She also began to write poetry. Although she would readily share her stories with her classmates, she was more reluctant to share her poetry and kept her poetry journal in the bottom of her backpack so that she could keep it private.

Life in her regular class wasn't always comfortable. Her third-grade teacher, Mrs. Kettering, gave her an especially hard time about being in the gifted program. Mrs. Kettering insisted that Sarah complete her regular assignments as well as assignments for her gifted class and penalized her when she missed class work on the days she was in TAG. Some days she missed things she already knew; other days, she really did miss important parts of the topic the class was studying. Now, in the eighth grade, she still feels that there are parts of the curriculum that are just blanks for her; and as much as she knows about some things, there are others that just don't make sense.

There are no services for gifted children after sixth grade in the Midland district, but Sarah has been placed in an advanced math program. She took prealgebra in seventh grade and is currently taking Algebra I for high school credit. Her other classes are heterogeneous, and most of her teachers use teacher-directed strategies that address the class as a whole. A notable difference is Mrs. Sands, her science teacher, who has divided up the class into teams. Sarah has noticed that her team often does more challenging work than the others, although they are all studying the same topic. During this 9-week class, they are working independently on different projects, and she is currently working on an aerospace project for the science fair.

Science fair has been a high point in Sarah's academic work for the past several years. Based on work she'd done as a young child in their kitchen and garage, her projects routinely won at the school and district level and last year won third place at the state competition. She has been begging her father to send her to Space Camp next summer, but he doesn't know if they will have the money to send her. She and a friend have started painting house numbers on curbs for donations from friendly neighbors.

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Now that all the kids from her TAG classes are at the middle school, her social life is great. All the kids sit together at lunch. The conversation is really fun, and everyone laughs at her jokes.

Susan is still her best friend, and the girls often spend weekends together. Sarah was invited to go with the Mitchells on vacation last summer, and she enjoyed visiting the Smithsonian Institution, especially the National Air and Space Museum, in Washington, DC. She wonders what it would be like to be a poetry-writing astronaut.

Her relationships with her teachers run the gamut from horrible to wonderful. Her Ohio history teacher has the students read **round-robin** around the room, and she is frequently reprimanded for not knowing where to start when it is her turn. There is a great deal of cheating on her multiple-choice tests, and she is incensed when someone who she thinks knows nothing gets a 100. Her history teacher begins class with a pile of worksheets, and when the pile is gone, the class is over. She has been in trouble twice for talking and served detention once for writing “creative” answers on her worksheet. Her computer science teacher told her that she “ruined” his class with her smart-aleck remarks. Her English teacher talks with her about the latest novels and encourages her to write her own stories. She secretly works on her poetry in her room at night.

Sarah’s grades are still exceptional. She almost always gets straight A’s, except when she doesn’t follow directions and gets a zero for one or more assignments. The only class she has to work really hard in is science. Mrs. Sands gives her an A only if she achieves the high standard she sets for herself at the beginning of each grading period. About half the time, her grade report includes such comments as “Talks too much,” “Doesn’t follow directions,” or “Doesn’t focus on the work at hand.”

Sarah is on the eighth-grade volleyball team. Although she is tall and well coordinated, she is not particularly aggressive. She frustrates her coach, who wishes Sarah would be more serious about sports. Sarah insists that she wants to play just for fun.

Her parents wish she were a bit more like Bethany, and lecture her about how important it is to get along with others. They tell her she needs to try her best at everything she does. They tell her it is more important to be nice than to be smart.

TWELFTH GRADE

Midland High School

Sarah Brown is now 17 and a senior at Midland High School. Her sister, Bethany, a junior in college, is majoring in music and English, on a full scholarship arranged by a guidance counselor at school and her colleague, who is a music professor at a good private college located about 2 hours from Midland.

During high school, the tightly knit group that had formed in her TAG days started to drift apart. One of the boys moved, and a couple of the girls started dating outside the group. Most of the kids took part in the state’s postsecondary option, in which they attended classes at the local college. Sarah took several courses, and although she enjoyed talking with the professors, she did not really get to know her fellow students. They did not seem that interested in what they were studying, and she had little in common with them outside the class.

Sarah and Susan continue to be friends, but their busy schedules make it hard to spend as much time together as they used to. Susan is dating a boy from a nearby school and usually

is busy on Friday and Saturday nights. One weekend, Susan invited Sarah to join her and some of her boyfriend's friends at a church youth group picnic. Although Sarah was excited about going, she didn't have a very good time. The other students all knew each other and didn't seem very interested in talking with her. After a few embarrassing moments of standing alone, she was invited by the adult group leader to help set up the dessert table. She spent the rest of the evening talking with the adult chaperones.

Sarah decided not to pursue interscholastic sports in high school but has been fairly active in intramurals. She played in the volleyball and softball tournaments set up through the physical education department and was happy just to be in the gym and on the field playing with other students who played for the sheer enjoyment of it.

In the ninth grade, Sarah talked with Mr. Haines about getting a high school team together for a critical problem-solving competition. Although some of the former TAG students showed initial interest, there was no support from the high school teachers or from the school. The idea soon faded away, and the students got caught up in other activities.

All of Sarah's classes at the high school were in the college prep track, in which about two thirds of the students were enrolled. In most classes, the teacher covered a portion of the textbook, then asked the students to answer a few questions for homework. Sarah usually finished her work before class was over and began reading one of the novels she always carried in her book bag. Her science classes remained her favorite, and a succession of interesting and dedicated teachers helped her pursue her passion. She attended Space Camp one summer on a partial scholarship, and the summer before her senior year she was a teen counselor at a science camp. She continued to pursue her own projects and won science fairs in biology, chemistry, and physics as she progressed through high school. Her physics teacher excused her from the regular lectures and labs so that she could pursue her own independent projects.

Now, as a senior, it appears that Sarah has stopped playing the game. She dropped an advanced placement English class and has decided not to compete in this year's science fair. She turns in enough work for a B or low A, calculating how little she can do and still have a decent average. Applications for colleges lie on her desk at home. The envelope from the Educational Testing Service with her ACT scores is still unopened. When confronted by her mother, she said, "I'm doing just fine. My grades are better than just about anyone's. I know I can get into State U. at the last minute. And it's about time I had some fun."

Encouraged by her parents to talk with someone outside the family about her future, she made an appointment with the school guidance counselor. The counselor told her that she was fed up with students who are intelligent but don't have any plans for the future. She said that Sarah could be anything she wanted to be—she just needed to "get her act together." Sarah knew that there were lots of things she couldn't be—or wouldn't want to be—but was having a hard time picturing just what it was that she was supposed to be. When she received a note from the counselor asking that she make an appointment to discuss scholarship opportunities, Sarah dropped it into the nearest wastebasket.

The students Sarah is hanging around with are mostly good students who are beginning to show up at school with new body piercings, tattoos, and creative haircuts. Sarah has taken a job at the local convenience store after school and on weekends so that she can make some spending money. She studies the magazines in the convenience store to see how people look in places far away from Midland, and she and her friends struggle to look more cosmopolitan, buying clothes at the local thrift shop rather than at the local discount store. They have weekly—or biweekly—parties, usually with beer and sometimes marijuana. Occasionally

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someone brings something more interesting for them all to try. Sarah finds their conversations about books and music and politics and life “out there” endlessly fascinating. She continues to write poetry and is anxious to share it with her friends, who are impressed with the depth of her emotion and the seriousness of her work.

Sarah’s parents see a smart young person who is throwing away opportunities for her future. They know that her intelligence, once harnessed, can open doors for her and that she is capable of doing so much for herself, for her family, and for society. They wonder if they have done enough to make sure that Sarah reaches her full potential. They wonder if her teachers have seen her potential and have cared enough to challenge her.

Sarah wonders what all the fuss is about.

Sarah's Cumulative Folder

August 27

Dear Parents,

Last spring your child took an Otis Lennon Ability Test and a Stanford Achievement Test. On these tests, a Student Ability Index (SAI or IQ) of 126 or above and a 95% on the achievement composite is required to meet the Midland gifted service eligibility criterion. Your child did very well on one or both of these tests and may qualify for our gifted program. In order to determine this, further evaluation must be done by our school psychologist, school psychologist intern, or gifted intervention specialist. This involves your child meeting with one person for one or more assessments. You will be notified of all results.

Please do not make a big deal out of this with your child. He or she is very talented regardless of how well they do on these assessments. Should your child qualify for the program, you will still have the option of turning down the services. Your child may then be looked at again for placement in the program the following school year.

If you agree to allow further evaluation of your child, please sign the form enclosed and return it by August 31. If you have any questions, please contact me at 555-3452.

Thanking you,



Mr. Haines
Talented and Gifted Teacher

Midland School District

Educational Report

Sarah Brown
Grade 4
Clover Valley Elementary

D.O.B. September 21
C.A. 9 years, 3 months

Reason for referral: An individual ability measure was requested to assist with determining gifted eligibility in the area of Superior Cognitive.

Observations: Sarah was very focused and task oriented. She was personable and cooperative. Her level of conversational proficiency appeared above average for her grade.

Test Administered:

Woodcock-Johnson III—Test of Cognitive Abilities

	Standard Score (Mean=100, SD=15, SEM=3)
Verbal Ability	128
Thinking Ability	133
Cognitive Efficiency	116
General Intellectual Ability	130

Sarah earned a GIA of 130 on the WJ-III, placing her in the Superior classification of cognitive ability. In this respect, her performance equaled or exceeded 98% of the standardization group. The chances that her IQ lies between 124 and 136 are ninety out of one hundred. Sarah's relative strength is in pulling together information to solve a problem.

Sarah's ability score of 130 meets the eligibility requirement for Superior Cognitive identification.

To be completed annually by October 30th and reviewed by May

Written Educational Plan (WEP) for Gifted Students

Student Sarah Brown Grade Level 6 School year -

Area(s) of Identification (check all that apply) Serve in these areas:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Superior Cognitive | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Art |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reading/Writing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Music (vocal) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mathematics | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Creative Thinking | <input type="checkbox"/> Music (instrumental) |

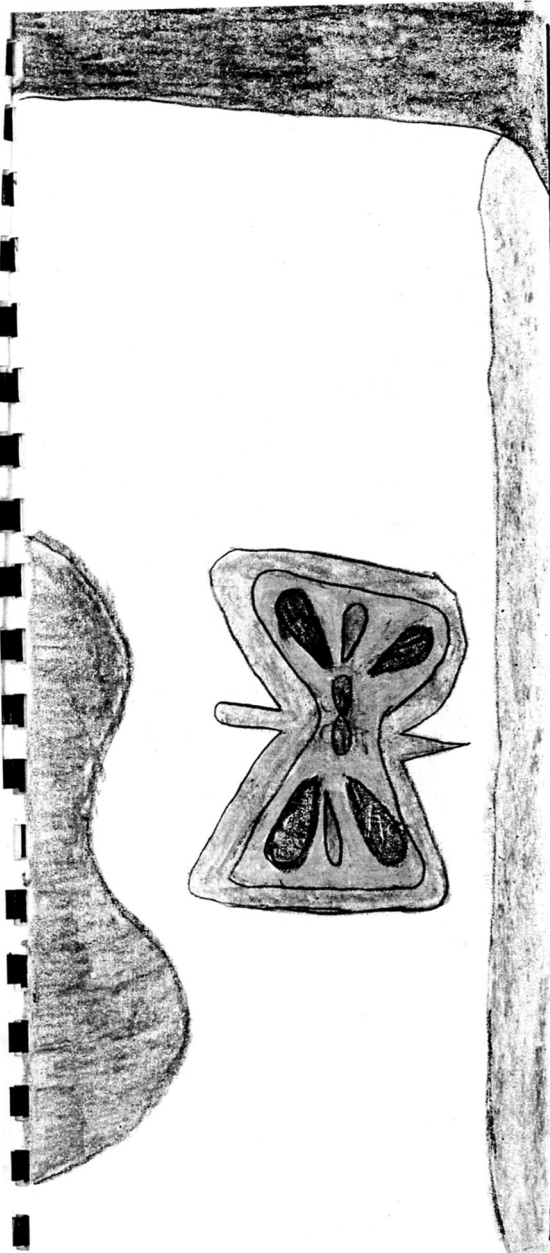
Service Providers

Re	Reading/Language Teacher	C	Consulting Teacher	I	Intervention Specialist
Ma	Math Teacher	L	Librarian/Media Specialist	G	Guidance Personnel
Sc	Science Teacher	GS	Gifted Specialist	P	Parent
So	Social Studies Teacher	M	Mentor	V	Volunteer
				O	Other

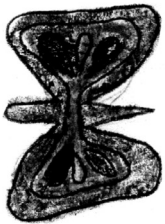
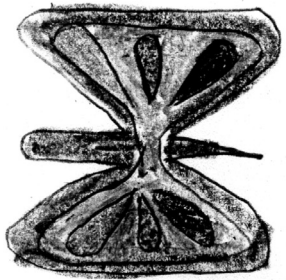
The following individuals have participated in this Written Educational Plan:

Re	<u>Raizk</u>	C		I	
Ma	<u>Saunders</u>	L		G	
Sc	<u>Jasper</u>	GS	<u>Haines</u>	P	<u>M/M Brown</u>
So		M		V	
O		O		O	

Service Options	Re	Ma	Sc	So	C	L	GS	M	-	G	P	>	O	O
Acceleration														
Advanced Placement Classes														
Career Counseling														
Classroom Intervention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>										
Cluster Grouping														
Differentiated Instruction (Extra-curricular Academic Involvement)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>										
Gifted Pull-Out Program	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
Guiding Independent Studies for content enrichment							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
Guiding Independent Studies for skill development														
Honors Classes														
Intervention Specialist														
Mentorship Networking														
PSEO Post Secondary Enrollment Option														
Visual/Performing Arts Instruction														
Other:														
Notes:														



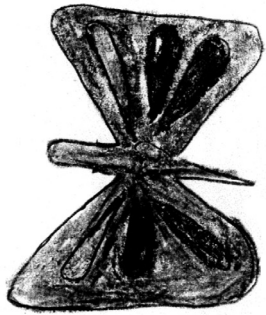
Once there lived a colorful
butterfly, it was so beautiful. Its
name was little fly



She would often say, to her

mom and dad, "I would like

to go outside..."



and take a fly.

THE UNBELIEVABLE ADVENTURES IN SPACE

Asteroids

MARS

At

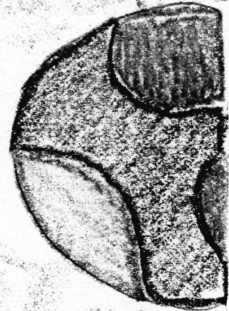


MERCURY

SUN



VENUS



The Mystery of Life

Why does the sun rise,
and the earth spin,
and the seasons change
regular
as clockwork.

Why does the moon
control the tides,
as they wash in
and out
in a never-ending pattern.

And why are there wars fought,
and battles engaged,
when we should be
working,
reaching,
striving toward common goals.

These questions remain,
unanswered,
as the mystery
of life.

Sarah
Grade
8

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